



Budget Watchdog

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The Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Bill: A List of Broken Promises

Republicans Use Gimmicks to Shoehorn Bill Into Budget Framework

Leave No Education Promise Unbroken

Earlier this year, Democrats warned that the Republican budget resolution was badly flawed: it underfunds important priorities while leaving a gaping budget deficit. The Labor-HHS appropriations bill being considered on the House floor today bears out those warnings.

The Republican budget resolution made explicit promises: an overall \$3 billion increase for the Department of Education, including increases of \$1.3 billion for Pell Grants, \$1 billion for Title I, and \$2.2 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The Labor-HHS appropriations bill breaks all of these promises. The bill provides \$700 million less than promised for the Department of Education. It falls short of the budget resolution's Pell Grant goal by more than \$400 million, and freezes the maximum Pell Grant award. Title I receives \$334 million less than the Republicans vowed to provide in the budget resolution, which is an astounding \$6.1 billion below the level authorized just last year in the No Child Left Behind Act. IDEA's increase is \$1.2 billion short of what the budget resolution pledged families with disabled children. (See page 2 for highlights of broken Republican promises.)

A \$2.2 Billion Gimmick

Not only does the Labor-HHS bill underfund important priorities, it circumvents the spending limits Republicans set in their budget resolution.

The 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Bill contained \$25.8 billion in advance appropriations, a higher-than-usual amount. (Advance appropriations allocate 2004 funding in 2003.) Last month, Republicans decided to flip a portion of that advance appropriation – \$2.2 billion – back into 2003. This move “frees up” \$2.2 billion dollars under the 2004 budget resolution cap of \$784.7 billion, but at the same time deepens the 2003 deficit by the same amount.

Thus, by supporting this bill, Republicans retreat from the education funding promises made in their budget resolution, as well as the overall funding levels set by their budget resolution.

The reason that Republicans break their promises to fund key priorities like education is clear: their budget needs to make room for \$1.3 trillion in new tax cuts on top of the \$1.35 trillion in tax cuts they have already enacted into law since 2001.

Program	Budget Resolution Promise	Labor-HHS Bill
Department of Education overall funding	\$3 billion increase	\$2.3 billion \$700 million short
Pell Grants	\$1.3 billion increase	\$890 million more than \$400 million short, maximum award frozen
Title I	\$1 billion increase	\$666 million \$334 million short and \$6.1 billion below level authorized in NCLB
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	\$2.2 billion increase	\$1 billion \$1.2 billion short